



Senate Bill 47

Evidence – Wiretapping and Electronic Surveillance – Fair Housing Testing

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: January 31, 2023

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 47. This bill would provide counties with an additional tool in the enforcement of federal, state, and local fair housing standards.

In 1968, the federal government passed the Fair Housing Act with the intent of protecting Americans from discrimination when it comes to renting or buying a home, getting a mortgage, seeking housing assistance, or engaging in other housing-related activities. The act made it illegal to discriminate against people based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, or disability. The State of Maryland's own fair housing laws went even further, creating additional protections for marital status, gender identity, and source of income. With today's housing scarcity, it is challenging enough for many to find a home, let alone contend with the possible burdens of discrimination.

SB 47 would provide an important tool for jurisdictions seeking to take direct action in the detection and prevention of discrimination in their local housing markets. The bill strikes a balance, limiting the scope of who can legally record calls when testing for compliance with federal, state, and local fair housing policies.

SB 47 gives local jurisdictions an additional tool to ensure compliance with fair housing policies and combat the current housing crisis. For this reason, **MACo SUPPORTS SB 47** and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.